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Admission of Montana

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Recommended Citation

S. Rep. No. 733, 50th Cong., 1st Sess. (1888)

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 26, 1888.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. PLATT, from the Committee on Territories, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 2512.]

The Committee on Territories, to whom was referred Senate bill 1619, to provide for the formation and admission into the Union of the State of Montana, having considered the same, respectfully report:

The welfare of the United States clearly requires the change of Territories to States at the earliest period when the population and resources and prospects of a Territory are such as to insure a well-ordered, stable government by the people. A Territorial condition is only permissible under our system while the new Territory is weak and sparsely inhabited, during which period it needs the sustaining and protecting power of the General Government. To keep a people in such Territorial condition beyond that period is unjust to the people and unworthy of the Government. States add to the dignity, the power, and honor of the Republic. Our system is a union of States, and the Territorial pupilage is only a stage of training necessary to precede the responsibilities of statehood, and to be dispensed with whenever the people of the Territory are fit to assume such responsibilities.

In the case of Montana the only question seems to be one of sufficient population. From statistics furnished by the United States surveyor-general for Montana it is found that the Territory contains:

Total area of Montana, in square miles.....	143, 776
Total area of Montana in acres	92, 016, 000
Number of acres, exclusive of Indian and military reservations	61, 442, 000
Number of acres surveyed to December, 1883	16, 000, 000
Number of acres in land grant to Northern Pacific Railroad	20, 500, 000
Number of acres Northern Pacific lands surveyed to December, 1883.....	5, 700, 000

The total valuation of property assessed for taxation increased from \$24,040,806.60 in 1881 to \$49,746,268.91 in 1884, and \$52,874,536.40 in 1885, and \$55,076,871.53 in 1886, as shown by the following table:

Beaverhead County.....	\$2, 756, 496. 00
Choteau County.....	3, 584, 682. 00
Custer County.....	4, 804, 104. 12
Dawson County.....	1, 628, 734. 15
Deer Lodge County.....	4, 358, 100. 00
Gallatin County.....	5, 694, 684. 00
Jefferson County.....	2, 354, 363. 00
Lewis and Clarke County.....	9, 088, 775. 50
Madison County.....	2, 873, 901. 00
Meagher County.....	5, 687, 255. 00

Missoula County	\$2,340,380.26
Silver Bow County	7,604,600.00
Yellowstone County	2,295,697.00
Total for 1886	55,076,871.53
Total for 1885	52,847,536.40
Increase	3,339,749.60

The report of the governor made June 30, 1887, gives the assessed value of taxable property for the year at \$60,200,000, a further increase during the year of over \$5,000,000. This does not include the mining interests which are exempt from taxation, nor the more than 2,000 miles of railroad now in successful operation. If these interests were assessed, it is safe to say that \$100,000,000 would not be too large a figure for the assessable value of its property.

Its chief industries are mining and stock raising. During the last year it produced \$26,000,000 gold and silver, copper and lead.

The governor reports the number of domestic animals as follows: Cattle, 1,400,000; horses, 190,000; sheep, 2,000,000.

In 1885 there were 23 banking houses and 31 newspapers, which have since largely increased. The statistics of the number of schools is not at hand, but the amount of school money raised by direct taxation during the last year was \$223,871, and from fines in various courts \$6,466, making for public schools \$230,337. The Territory has no debt and a surplus in its treasury of \$25,000. The recent developments in agriculture are very promising. The most profitable agriculture is carried on by irrigation, but the increased rain-fall, which seems to result from the development and settlement of the Territory, promises a large increase in the area of land adapted to cultivation without irrigation.

No census has been taken since 1880, when its total population was but 39,159, but the last seven years have been years of rapid development and increase. The total vote cast for Delegate in Congress in November, 1886, was 32,262, an increase since the previous election of 5,293. The increase during the year 1887 is said to have been more rapid than during the former period. Adding a year's increase to the voting population, at the ratio of increase from 1884 to 1886, and there would be a voting population in November, 1887, of 34,908, giving a population, upon a ratio of 1 voter to $4\frac{1}{2}$ inhabitants, of 156,086. It is safe to say that the present population of the Territory equals the present unit of representation, and that before the necessary steps can be taken to form a State government it will be considerably in excess of the same. The ability of the Territory to support a large population is conceded, and its resources and present agencies of development are such as prevent the possibility of retrogression.

In view of the facts presented, the committee is of opinion that the time has fully come for the admission of the people of Montana into the Union as a State.

The bill referred to the committee seeming to need amendment in several particulars, an original bill is herewith reported as a substitute, with the recommendation that it pass and that the bill referred to the committee be indefinitely postponed.